

THE OBJECTIVES OF UNITED STATES MILITARY
INTERVENTION IN NORTHERN IRAQ BETWEEN
OPERATION DESERT STORM AND
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE OBJECTIVES OF UNITED STATES MILITARY INTERVENTION IN
NORTHERN IRAQ BETWEEN OPERATION DESERT STORM AND OPERATION
IRAQI FREEDOM by Major Michael A. Schiesl, 65 pages.

Soon after the end of the Persian Gulf War in 1991, the Kurdish people of northern Iraq rebelled against the regime of Saddam Hussein. The rebellion was violently crushed by the Iraqi military resulting in over 1 million Kurdish refugees throughout northern Iraq, northwestern Iran, and southeastern Turkey. This humanitarian tragedy prompted the United States to initiate Operation Provide Comfort. Since Operation Provide Comfort I began, and through its subsequent incarnations, Provide Comfort II and Northern Watch, the United States applied military force in order to accomplish a number of objectives. These objectives can be broken down into three categories: humanitarian, military, and political. This thesis analyzes the primary objectives of the United States military under each of these three categories in order to determine the answer to the primary question. The analysis resulted in the determination that the United States military did not accomplish all of the primary objectives it set out to accomplish. Although the application of military force successfully accomplished its principal humanitarian objective (the resettlement of the displaced Kurds), and although it was successfully accomplishing its primary military objective (deter Hussein from again attacking the Kurdish population), it did not accomplish its chief political objective (containment).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“But there’s another way for the bloodshed to stop, and that is for the Iraqi military and the Iraqi people to take matters into their own hand to force Saddam Hussein the dictator to step aside and to comply with the UN and then rejoin the family of peace-loving nations” (Bush 1991b).

On 28 February 1991 President George Herbert Walker Bush announced a cease-fire ending the Gulf War; two weeks earlier the American president made a statement that may or may not have played a role in encouraging the Kurdish people of northern Iraq to rebel against the Hussein regime. In urging “the Iraqi people to take matters into their own hand to force Saddam Hussein the dictator to step aside,” the American president effectively warranted and possibly even inspired the rebellion of the Iraqi populace against the government of Iraq. The rebellion happened; it was violent and short-lived. At the end of Operation Desert Storm, forces of northern Iraq attempted to rebel against the dictatorial rule of Saddam Hussein just as the Shia forces rebelled in the southern part of the country. This resulted in Iraqi President Hussein launching a massive retaliatory attack on Kurdish persons residing in the northern section of the country and the Shia populace in the South, bringing the ill-fated revolution to a swift and summary conclusion. This resulted in over 1 million Kurdish refugees throughout Turkey, Iran, and Iraq (Brune 1993, 128). The United States of America witnessed this and, although a large military force was within striking distance throughout both the rebellion and the retaliation, it remained on the sidelines with no military intervention. American

intervention was to wait until the refugee problem in the northern Kurdish region became a humanitarian disaster.

Background and Context of the Problem

On 27 February 1991 the President of the United States announced a cease-fire officially ending Operation Desert Storm. On 2 March the United Nations (UN) passed United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 686 expressing the terms of the cease-fire. On 3 March the Iraqi leadership formally accepted the terms of the cease-fire.

The cease-fire meeting on March 3 was dominated by American military commanders. The U.S. chose to end the war on Iraqi soil, selecting an Iraqi air base at Safwan for the discussions and signing ceremonies. At the session, General Schwarzkopf told Iraq's General Sultan Hashim Ahmed that the U.S. delegation would not negotiate but would give him instructions prepared by the UN Security Council for Iraq to fulfill. These orders to Iraq included methods for avoiding accidental military engagements, for exchanging POW's and giving data on missing soldiers and for locating Iraqi mines planted in battle areas. Once Ahmed agreed, the session adjourned and the preparation of final cease-fire terms began at the United Nations. During March, the UN Security Council determined the terms Iraq had to comply with before economic sanctions would end and peace would be completed. (Brune 1993, 118)

UNSCR 686--2 March 1991

- Iraq must release prisoners detained during the Gulf War.
- Iraq must return Kuwaiti property seized during the Gulf War.
- Iraq must accept liability under international law for damages from its illegal invasion of Kuwait. (White House Press Secretary 2002, 4)

The terms agreed upon for the 3 March cease-fire included little gain for the victorious coalition and little loss for the defeated Iraqis. Hussein was still authorized full access to his remaining military force as long as it did not engage coalition troops. This force he would use to crush the Kurdish rebellion in the north of Iraq and the Shia rebellion in the south of Iraq during the weeks immediately following the cease-fire. On 3

April, the United Nations Security Council passed UNSCR 687 and two days later, on 5 April, UNSCR 688 was passed.

UNSCR 687--3 April 1991

- Iraq must “unconditionally accept” the destruction, removal or rendering harmless “under international supervision” of all “chemical and biological weapons and all stocks of agents and all related subsystems and components and all research, development, support and manufacturing facilities.”
- Iraq must “unconditionally agree not to acquire or develop nuclear weapons or nuclear-weapons-usable material” or any research, development or manufacturing facilities.
- Iraq must “unconditionally accept” the destruction, removal or rendering harmless “under international supervision” of all “ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 KM and related major parts and repair and production facilities.”
- Iraq must not “use, develop, construct or acquire” any weapons of mass destruction.
- Iraq must reaffirm its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
- Creates the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) to verify the elimination of Iraq’s chemical and biological weapons programs and mandated that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verify elimination of Iraq’s nuclear weapons program.
- Iraq must declare fully its weapons of mass destruction programs.
- Iraq must not commit or support terrorism, or allow terrorist organizations to operate in Iraq.
- Iraq must cooperate in accounting for the missing and dead Kuwaitis and others.
- Iraq must return Kuwaiti property seized during the Gulf War. (White House Press Secretary 2002, 4)

UNSCR 688--5 April 1991

- “Condemns” repression of Iraqi civilian population, “the consequences of which threaten international peace and security.”
- Iraq must immediately end repression of its civilian population.
- Iraq must allow immediate access to international humanitarian organizations to those in need of assistance. (White House Press Secretary 2002, 5)

In the time period between the defeat of the Kurdish rebellion and Operation Iraqi Freedom, the United States continuously participated in military operations other than war on the ground in, and in the air above, northern Iraq. In order to protect the Kurdish people of northern Iraq from Iraqi military aggression and provide essential humanitarian

assistance to this population, Combined/Joint Task Force Provide Comfort was initiated. This operation was initially touted as an effort to facilitate the tenets of UNSCR 688. Though the claim was not initially disputed, the issue of whether or not this intervention was sanctioned by the UN was questioned many years later. Originally consisting of a formidable military force, including up to twelve thousand American troops supported by personnel and materiel from thirty countries (Congress 1991), Operation Provide Comfort (OPC) was not only an active deterrent against Iraqi air and ground forces entering the region, but a humanitarian assistance operation providing food, medical care, and refugee assistance to over one million displaced persons. At the outset of this effort, thirteen nations contributed troops. Five years later only the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Turkey remained members of the coalition.

Coalition ground operations staged out of the Military Coordination Center, a staging base for humanitarian support throughout what was called the “security zone.” The security zone was an area of northern Iraq along its Turkish border where Iraqi ground forces could not enter without meeting coalition resistance, an effective safe-haven for the Kurds of the region. Air operations staged out of Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, provided protection for ground operations through the implementation of a no-fly zone (NFZ). This NFZ, which was still being enforced at the onset of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003, ensured that any Iraqi air forces attempting to enter the airspace north of the thirty-sixth degree north parallel were deterred from attacking personnel on the ground or in any way hindering the ongoing humanitarian effort. By July, 1991 the effort appeared to be initially successful. Refugees were protected from Hussein’s military and

moving back to their villages: Operation Provide Comfort I (OPC I) was complete and Operation Provide Comfort II (OPC II) commenced.

While coalition air forces participating in the operation remained abundant and relatively powerful in Provide Comfort II, by August 1996 the coalition ground forces in the region had dropped to virtually nothing more than a small Joint Special Operations Task Force at Incirlik Air Base and one United States Special Forces detachment in Iraq. This Special Forces detachment, centered near the village of Zakho, provided little more than a symbolic coalition ground presence and what limited humanitarian assistance they could provide to Kurds within the security zone. Soon after Iraqi ground forces crossed the thirty-sixth parallel and overran the Kurdish city of Irbil on the last day of August, 1996, this Special Forces detachment, the last remaining coalition ground force in Iraq, permanently departed the country. Three days after this aggression, on 3 September 1996, Operation Desert Strike commenced as the United States launched cruise missile strikes against Iraq in retaliation for the siege on Irbil. By the end of 1996 Operation Quick Transit had successfully evacuated over six thousand Kurds from the troubled region (Congress 1997, 42) and Operation Provide Comfort evolved into Operation Northern Watch (ONW).

Operation Northern Watch commenced on 1 January 1997 as the successor to Provide Comfort. The United States, United Kingdom, and Turkey remained as the coalition lost the alliance of France during the transition. Purely an air operation, Northern Watch remained active in enforcing the NFZ over northern Iraq up to the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003.

The Research Question

Through Operations Provide Comfort I and II and Operation Northern Watch, the United States military used several different methodologies in striving to achieve humanitarian, military, and political objectives in northern Iraq. These means have covered a vast array of methods, ranging from working with non-governmental organizations in refugee camps and providing food for hungry Kurds, to evacuating Kurds from the region and dropping munitions on Iraqi ground forces. Some of these objectives have been explicit, stated objectives while others have been more implicit, assumed objectives.

If Provide Comfort was executed to relocate displaced Kurds, then why did United States forces remain once the Kurds of northern Iraq were returned to their homes? If Desert Strike was executed to warn Hussein not to use his military ground forces against the Kurdish region north of the thirty-sixth parallel, then why did the United States pull out all ground forces in concert with the operation? If the United States was intervening in the region to give the Kurdish population a safe-haven in northern Iraq secure from Hussein's aggression, then why was Quick Transit necessary to evacuate thousands of Kurds out of the country? What were the primary objectives of the United States force presence prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom? Was the United States military successful in accomplishing these objectives?

This thesis will research closely what the objectives of United States military intervention in the region were and whether or not these objectives were reached. The principal question on which this research centers is: In the time period between Operation

Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom, did United States military intervention in northern Iraq accomplish its intended objectives?

Secondary Questions

In order to address the primary research question, the study must first gather and analyze all of the data surrounding the issue, and answer the following secondary questions.

1. What were the principal intended humanitarian objectives of United States military intervention in northern Iraq during OPC/ONW?
2. What were the principal intended military objectives of United States military intervention in northern Iraq during OPC/ONW?
3. What were the principal intended political objectives of United States military intervention in northern Iraq during OPC/ONW?

Assumptions

The only assumption that is necessary for this study is that the United States of America has unclassified objectives for these military operations in northern Iraq and that these are available to the researcher either through publication of explicit objectives or through research and examination in determining implicit objectives.

Definition of Terms

Kurd: “A member of a pastoral and agricultural people who inhabit a plateau region in adjoining parts of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Armenia, and Azerbaijan”
(*Merriam-Webster Online*, <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>, 2 April 2003).

Operation Desert Fox: “On December 16, 1998, United States Central Command . . . military forces launched cruise missile attacks against military targets in Iraq. These

strikes were ordered by the President of the United States and were undertaken in response to Iraq's continued failure to comply with United Nations Security Council resolutions as well as their interference with United Nations Special Commission . . . [weapons] inspectors. The strikes were designed to deliver a serious blow to Saddam Hussein's capability to manufacture, store, maintain and deliver weapons of mass destruction and his ability to threaten or otherwise intimidate his neighbors" (*Federation of American Scientists Online*, http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/desert_fox.htm, 2 April 2003).

Operation Desert Strike: "In response [to the 31 August 1996 siege on Irbil] the president ordered a strike on military targets posing a threat to coalition aircraft in the no-fly zone. . . . On [3 September 1996] a coordinated cruise missile attack was launched against the Iraqi air defense infrastructure, including surface-to-air missile sites and command and control nodes in southern Iraq" (*Federation of American Scientists Online*, http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/desert_strike.htm, 2 April 02).

Shia: "The Muslims of the branch of Islam comprising sects believing in Ali and the Imams as the only rightful successors of Muhammad and in the concealment and messianic return of the last recognized Imam" (*Merriam-Webster Online*, <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>, 2 April 2003).

Siege on Irbil: "On August 31, 1996, elements of the Iraqi Army attacked and captured the [Kurdish faction known as the] PUK-held town of Irbil in the Kurdish autonomous region of northern Iraq. This renewed Iraqi aggression, led by a Republican Guard mechanized division with the support of regular army troops, alarmed the United States and coalition forces in the region. . . . The August attack was a significant

escalation of an ongoing struggle between [the rival] PUK and KDP Kurdish factions for control of the autonomous region” (*Federation of American Scientists Online*, http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/desert_strike.htm, 2 April 02).

Study Limitations

Limitations to this research include the researcher’s preference for the product to remain unclassified and the time available to complete the study. In order to allow this research to be conducted at unsecured facilities, and in order to allow the final product to be accessed at any unsecured facility, the research will be limited to unclassified sources and systems. The time limitation placed on this project will limit the researchers ability to spend as much time as preferred to conduct protracted research and comprehensively analyze all of the available information.

Scope and Delimitations

Operational Scope: Operation Provide Comfort I, Operation Provide Comfort II, Operation Northern Watch. Since the end of the Desert Storm, United States military operations in Iraq have remained constant. During the course of this research, military operations in the region have changed significantly with the onset of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This recent change in the United States military’s presence and activity in the region has muddled the lines between Iraqi Freedom and operations in northern Iraq directly related to Operation Northern Watch. As this research is intended to be historical in its effort to answer the primary question, this research will use 19 March 2003 as its unofficial end date for Operation Northern Watch. All references to operations in Iraq will be prior to 19 March 2003 unless otherwise specified. Operation Iraqi Freedom will not be addressed in this research except where pertinent to this study.

Regional/Ethnic Scope: Operation Southern Watch--Southern Iraq. The Shia

Muslim population in the South of Iraq has suffered many of the same torments as the Kurds in the north of the country. Although the similarities in American military operations ongoing in both regions are many, the elementary differences between the Kurds and the Shias are vast, and the objectives of American intervention are therefore impacted by different variables. Although many of these objectives may be similar to those of Northern Watch, this research will be limited only to the United States military involvement in northern Iraq and address Operation Southern Watch or the southern Iraqi no-fly zone only where necessary.

Regional/Ethnic Scope: The Kurdish Situation. The Kurdish population resides

primarily in northern and eastern Iraq, northwestern Iran, and eastern Turkey. A fundamental problem in dealing with the issues surrounding the Kurdish people of this region is the question of a Kurdish nation or nation-state. Not dissimilar to the question of a Palestinian state in the Holy Land, this issue is too broad and complex to broach in this paper and will therefore not be addressed.

Political Scope: The Multinational Coalition. The United States intervention in

northern Iraq was a coalition effort from the very beginning. Numerous countries participated in this combined effort while only the United States, Turkey, and the United Kingdom were continuous in their participation from the first week of OPC through to the conclusion of ONW. While the interests of coalition nations played a role in United States military intervention in the region, these interests and the participation of these other nations will not be a point of focus. United States interests, goals, and objectives will be the focus.

Political Scope: Ethical/Legal Justification. The use of military force by a nation against a sovereign state automatically compels one to seek some incontestable warrant for such an endeavor. The United States intervened in northern Iraq without an invitation from or the permission of the Iraqi regime, without a UN sanction, and without a declaration of war. The issue of whether or not this intervention is justified (politically, ethically, or morally) or even legal (International Law, Law of Land Warfare, etc.) is an issue that this research will not address.

Significance of the Study

The present situation in Iraq today may be better understood if the past is understood. The possibility of armed conflict with Iraq was considerably amplified with onset of hostilities on 11 September 2001 and the advent of the Global War on Terrorism. This possibility was realized with the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Between Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom the United States military remained involved in the region for reasons that may or may not have resulted from an inability to achieve certain objectives in either Desert Storm or any of the operations in the region since. This thesis may provide insight on some validation for Operation Iraqi Freedom or what future military intervention in the region may or may not look like. Considering the nature of the current situation in the region today, this research has as much to do with the current world situation as it did at the inception of Provide Comfort.

The question of objectives and their correlation to the means by which United States policy-makers intend to reach these objectives must be asked about every operation in which the United States military becomes involved. This research will examine the use of different applications of military force in Iraq to accomplish certain

objectives. It will examine how these objectives were or were not realized in the past and how effective the methods employed by the United States military were in attaining these objectives. It may shed light on lessons learned from previous operations and provide historical substantiation of what the implications incurred may resemble after future operations in this tumultuous region.

In conclusion, this thesis will detail what role the United States has played in northern Iraq for the last twelve years, how this role pertained to its objectives, and if those objectives were accomplished.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The nature of United States intervention in northern Iraq, coupled with the significant time period that this intervention covered, has led to an inordinate amount of literature on the topic. Since OPC began newspapers and magazines have from time to time presented articles regarding the military presence and possible objectives involved. Journalists have conducted hours of interviews, military officers have written volumes, and authors have published books on the topic. Politicians have given speeches and the UN has passed numerous resolutions and stated many viewpoints on the issue. The copious amount of literature surrounding the military intervention in northern Iraq has made this research simultaneously both labor intensive and ostensibly effortless in finding appropriate resources. The purpose of this chapter is to review the existing resources available and summarize any conclusions. There are many differing viewpoints on this topic, and therefore there are many different ways to approach this examination. This review will break down the existing resources by the general category of the source of the information. Beginning with American presidents and proceeding through government agencies, military officers, authors and subject matter experts, and concluding with the United Nations, these sources have many different viewpoints on what the objectives in the region were, and sometimes just as importantly, what they were not. Although some of this information may be looked upon as opinionated, politically skewed, or one-sided, much of it is authoritative and noteworthy.

The American Presidents

In a 16 April 1991 press conference, then President George H.W. Bush, in speaking of Provide Comfort stated, “I want to underscore that all that we are doing is motivated by humanitarian concerns. . . . The prohibition against Iraqi fixed or rotary wing aircraft flying north of the thirty-sixth parallel thus remains in effect” (Bush 1991d). This designates humanitarian objectives for the mission, backed up with military force.

On 28 December 1998, former President Clinton stated, “The no-fly zones have been and will remain an important part of our containment policy. Because we effectively control the skies over much of Iraq, Saddam has been unable to use air power to repress his own people or to lash out again at his neighbors” (Clinton 1998). This statement affirms an objective of containment for the humanitarian purpose of protecting the Iraqi people and Iraq’s neighboring states from Hussein’s aggression.

On 7 October 2002, President George W. Bush stated “The world has tried no-fly zones to keep Saddam from terrorizing his own people. . . . After 11 years during which we have tried containment, sanctions, inspections, even selected military action, the end result is that Saddam Hussein still has chemical and biological weapons, and is increasing his capabilities to make more. And he is moving ever closer to developing a nuclear weapon” (Bush 2002). This speech indicates the objectives of the humanitarian protection of the people of Iraq, containment, and alludes to keeping Hussein in compliance with UNSCR 687 as it applies to weapons of mass destruction.

The references cited above are but a very small sample of what the American presidents have acknowledged as the objectives of United States military intervention in the north of Iraq. These three references are typical of how from one administration to the

next the objectives vary and how the presidential policy messages voiced impact the nature of United States military objectives in Iraq.

The Department of State

Since the onset of OPC, the United States Department of State has consistently come forth with official statements on the situation in northern Iraq. While many of these statements focus on the status of Iraqi compliance with UNSCRs, the objectives of United States military intervention in the region are alluded to in many areas. In a Department of State briefing on 20 September 1996 spokesman Nicholas Burns stated: “There’s every reason for Turkey to be concerned about Saddam Hussein and the aggression and the threat that he poses to Turkey. That’s one of the reasons why we have acted so carefully and so quickly over the last five years to try to help Turkey stabilize northern Iraq; that’s why we have ‘Operation Provide Comfort’ in place; why we’ve agreed with the Turks that that will continue” (Department of State 1996a). Three days later, on 23 September Burns is quoted as saying: “The United States strongly believes--and Turkey concurs--that Saddam Hussein can play no useful role in northern Iraq; that neither the United States nor Turkey would support the extension of Saddam’s influence in northern Iraq and in fact, that both of us hope to work to create stability in northern Iraq without Saddam Hussein’s forces in play” (Department of State 1996b). Statements such as these indicate that United States military intervention in the region is to stabilize northern Iraq and keep Hussein’s influence out of the region.

The United States Military

On 4 September 1991, then commander of OPC Lieutenant General Shalikashvili laid out his mission, objectives, and tasks before the House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services as follows.

The mission that we had was very simple--to provide immediate relief to the refugees in the mountains and then, as soon as prudent, to turn over the operation to international relief agencies and private voluntary organizations. . . .

. . . The objectives that we set ourselves are not surprising, I am sure.

- Immediate: Stop the dying and suffering; stabilize the population.
- Mid-term: Resettle population at temporary sites; establish sustainable, secure environment.
- Long-term: Return population to their homes.

Obviously, the first thing we had to do was stop the dying and the suffering in those camp sites . . . clearly, the stabilization of that population and trying to turn that curve around and improve their lot was of utmost first priority.

However, we also realized that due to the nature of the extraordinarily rugged terrain and the fact that it was very difficult to get water, food, shelter and medical support to them, we really had to relocate those people to someplace where we could get that help to them. The only place that was available where we could move them, the nearest valleys that had the road network that would support such a massive relief operation, was in northern Iraq. So we knew that we had to establish the necessary security in that part of northern Iraq and then begin to build temporary camp sites where we could relocate these refugees. (Congress 1997)

More recently USCENTCOM Commander General Tommy Franks was quoted as saying:

I will tell you so long as we are involved in Operation Northern Watch and Operation Southern Watch, that being the patrolling of the no-fly zones in Iraq, we will continue to place our young men and women in uniform at risk. On the other hand, should we not be involved in containing Saddam Hussein and his ambitions, there is a potential for further proliferation and building of weapons of mass destruction in that region, as well as the continuation of rebuilding programs with conventional forces, as well as the potential proliferation of terrorist threats from Iraq. (Congress 2001)

From day one of the operation, OPC/ONW commanders and other military leaders have made statements regarding the mission and the overall situation in the north of Iraq. These statements have focused on the objectives being primarily humanitarian as suggested by General Shalikashvili's statements during OPC, to being focused on containment as indicated by General Franks during ONW.

Analysis of OPC/ONW and the effectiveness of the NFZs in Iraq has been done by various other military officers in writing analytical research papers for various military education schools. *Air Power in MOOTW: A Critical Analysis of Using No-fly Zones to Support National Objectives* by Major Michael V. McKelvey for the Air Command and Staff College asserts that "As long as Iraq remains a threat to the stability of the Gulf region, and given the region's importance, a United States commitment is necessary. The U.S. must maintain strong ties with the GCC nations to aid in deterring threats against the stability of a region vital to our national interests" (McKelvey 1997). At the same time *The No-fly Zones in Iraq: Air Occupation* by Major David E. Peterson for the Army Command and Staff College (1996) makes similar assertions.

Other officers writing for professional journals and periodicals have a different point of view. USMC Colonel (later General) James Jones remarked in 1996 "At the 90 day mark, it was clear that coalition objectives were achieved. Kurdish refugees were out of the mountains and either back in their villages of origin, on their way there, or in camps built by coalition forces" (Jones 1996, 107). This statement may lead one to infer that the relocation of Kurdish refugees was the primary objective, and that indeed the coalition's objective was complete in the earlier days of OPC.

The Press and The Pundits

Assertions have been made that the objectives of the initial presence in Operation Provide Comfort were neither military nor humanitarian, but political. Tim Ripley, published in *International Defense Review* in October 1991, states:

High-level US policy makers admit that television pictures of the plight of Kurdish refugees, combined with footage of George Bush and John Major washing their hands of the Kurdish revolt, were instrumental in forcing leaders to change course and intervene militarily in northern Iraq. . . . The accusation that western leaders were again leaving the Kurds to their fate at the hands of the Butcher of Baghdad is particularly emotive to public opinion, and one that few politicians facing re-election--such as George Bush and John Major--would ignore, even if professional military advice from the likes of Generals Colin Powell and Peter de la Billiere is to withdraw troops. (Ripley 1991, 1057)

In *Confronting Iraq: US Policy and the Use of Force Since the Gulf War*, Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman state, "The primary objective in the creation of the enclaves was humanitarian; Washington sought to succor the Kurds, protecting them from the Baath regime's oppression. A related goal was to reassure Turkey, which feared a massive influx of Iraqi Kurdish refugees" (Byman 2000, 44). Both the humanitarian and political aspects of the intervention are addressed here.

Iraq Since the Gulf War: Prospectus for Democracy, edited by Fran Hazelton, states, "Operation Provide Comfort was an attempt to appease Turkey. Great efforts were made to stop the refugees from entering Turkey by providing immediate aid on the mountains. Refugees were actively encouraged to return to their homes under the impression that the allies would stay there to protect them. Turkey closed the border from day one and succeeded in creating enough pressure to have the refugee burden shouldered internationally" (Hazelton 1994, 234). The assertion here is simply that the

goal may have been neither humanitarian nor military, but the political appeasement of Turkey.

In *America and the Iraqi Crisis: 1990-1992*, author Lester Brune writes, “their objective was to guarantee order and to provide safety from Iraqi forces so that the Kurdish refugees would leave their mountain retreats and return home” (Brune 1993, 129). This indicates both military and humanitarian purposes for the intervention.

In his October 2000 article in the *Washington Post*, Thomas Ricks addresses issues surrounding Northern Watch and although in this piece containment and deterrence seem to be recognized as the objectives of the operation, there is some apparent dissention about what utility is being accomplished in moving toward these objectives. “As the United States enters its 10th year of confronting Hussein, military strategists are frustrated . . . ‘I no longer have any sense of what the containment of Iraq is all about,’ said retired Army Col. Andrew Bacevich, now a military expert at Boston University. ‘We just fly missions and drop bombs from time to time because we’ve been doing it for 10 years and no one can stop us from doing so.’ . . . Even some of the fighter pilots who have flown Northern Watch said they do not understand why it continues. ‘I think almost everybody thinks it is a waste of time,’ said a National Guard pilot who has done four tours of duty here” (*Washington Post*, 25 October 2000).

In the same article, Brigadier General Bob D. DuLaney, the American commander of Operation Northern Watch from October 1999 to March 2001, is quoted as saying: “They lack ‘a complete understanding of our mission,’ which he argued is a success as long as it deters Iraq from crushing the rebellious Kurds in the North. ‘Every day we’re here is a day that Saddam’s forces can’t attack’” (*Washington Post*, 25 October

2000). This statement points to the objective of the operation as one of deterring Iraq from attacking the Kurds of the region while the article's previous statements look upon the objective as containment.

Former United Nations Special Commission chief Scott Ritter may be one of the more well known western authorities on the situation in Iraq. Mr. Ritter brings a different perspective into the objectives of OPC/ONW in *Endgame: Solving the Iraqi Problem--Once and For All*. Ritter contends that although OPC was a "humanitarian effort to create a safe haven for the Kurds under siege by the Iraqis" (Ritter 1999, 131), the safe haven was to be used as a platform for intelligence gathering and a staging base for the destabilization of the regime and eventual overthrow of Hussein, all coordinated and funded by the American Central Intelligence Agency. In the end, however, Ritter admits, "The Clinton administration had inherited a hot potato. Under two consecutive Republican administrations, America's Iraqi policy had grown from no policy at all, to one of open embrace, to one of containment, to confrontation, and back to containment" (Ritter 1999, 133).

The United Nations

United Nations Security Council Resolution 688 has been cited as the justification for United States intervention in northern Iraq (Peters 1998). Many previous and subsequent resolutions have been used as either background or reinforcing arguments for this intervention. This argument, however, may not be valid. According to many, no United Nations resolution has ever sanctioned Provide Comfort or the institution of a NFZ (Graham-Brown 2001). Whether or not OPC/ONW is currently considered a United Nations sanctioned mission, the research indicates that at the time OPC I was being

conducted the operation was neither entirely outside of the realm of the UN nor was it was unconnected to the tenets of UNSCR 688. The mission started the day after the resolution was passed and the military mission was clearly an effort to bring relief to the Kurds of northern Iraq. The tenets of UNSCR 688 called for Iraq to end the repression of the civilian populace and to allow humanitarian organizations to assist those in need. President Bush stated just days after the mission commenced, “Consistent with United Nations Security Council Resolution 688 and working closely with the United Nations and other international relief organizations and our European partners, I have directed the United States military to begin immediately to establish several encampments in northern Iraq where relief supplies for these refugees will be made available in large quantities and distributed in an orderly way” (Bush 1991d). Whether the UN sanctioned the mission or did not sanction the mission, the tenets of UNSCR were all accomplished due to President Bush ordering the execution of Operation Provide Comfort. Even if this mission was not formally sanctioned by the United Nations, these resolutions and associated UN speeches and official reports can aid in analyzing the possible reasons why military action was initiated and the reasons it continued for over a decade.

The existing literature available for research on this topic is plentiful and will allow the study to quite clearly break down the objectives of OPC/ONW into humanitarian, military, and political groupings in order to answer the secondary questions. It is anticipated that an analysis of these and other relevant resources will provide the essential background necessary to suitably answer the primary question.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study is determine if the military intervention of the United States in northern Iraq during between Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom accomplished its objectives. For the sake of simplicity and clarity these objectives have been divided into the categories of humanitarian objectives, military objectives, and political objectives. In all likelihood, this research will uncover that over the course of OPC/ONW this mission had an inordinate amount of humanitarian, military, and political objectives; some of which may have remained consistent throughout, some that may have risen in priority and then lapsed, only to rise again at a later date, and some of which may have proved fleeting. The challenge in this research is to determine what the overall, explicit or implicit principal objectives were over the span of this operation and whether the application of military force by the United States accomplished these objectives.

The good in this study rises from the lessons that can be learned from an analysis of the objectives proposed for OPC/ONW and whether or not the military force employed to accomplish these objectives was optimal. If upon completion of this research, it can be shown that United States military force employed to accomplish its intended objectives was optimally effective, then not only will the research question be answered, but a basis for successful future operations of a similar nature may come to light. Similarly, if in the course of this research it is determined that the objectives were not optimally achieved with the methods employed by the United States military, then the research question will again be answered, and different lessons learned will be brought to light.

The methodology for this research involves a straightforward approach and in the end it will present conclusions based on simple deductive analysis. First, an extensive and detailed review of the literature surrounding the topic is conducted to ensure that all necessary points of information are accounted for appropriately. This is followed by a review of the content of the literature. Since the amount of literature on this topic is vast and the opposing views are many, this review must be accomplished in order to certify that all information presented is appropriately weighted according to the strength of each differing viewpoint, and that each viewpoint receives only what merit is warranted by its practicality and soundness. Upon completion of the content review of the literature the analysis will run its course, taking what information is available and making necessary clarifications and interpretations along the way, and drawing conclusions from the derivative observations. Recommendations may be made if appropriate, but on the whole any recommendations before the final chapter will likely prove to be unwarranted.

This format of this paper is purposefully structured to align with the study being presented. The first three chapters are the requisite background material necessary in presenting a valid and substantive thesis. Chapter 1 provides the primary question and follow-on questions to be addressed. It brings the reader the necessary background to understand the history and relevance of the thesis, and sets the basic limitations, scope and delimitations of the research. Chapter 2 is an extensive literature review and presents an overview of the existing works completed on this topic as well as a summary of many of the resources used in the conduct of the research.

This chapter is intended to give an explanation of how the research will synthesize the literature reviewed and present conclusions based on the research. The

procedure used in this research methodology breaks objectives into three separate categories; humanitarian, military and political. For each subcategory a series of criteria will be applied to determine whether or not these objectives have been achieved. The results will be documented accordingly.

Key Questions asked in relation to military intervention in northern Iraq:

1. What were the primary stated or non-stated objectives for the application of military force throughout the duration of the operation (broken into three categories; military, humanitarian, and political)?

2. What of these objectives were successfully accomplished in relation to the following criteria? (A mission's success, and degree of success will be based on any of the following that are applicable.)

a. Have the personnel and equipment specifically deployed to meet the objective been redeployed or otherwise removed from a position of influence relating to the objective?

b. Has the United States government acknowledged mission success either through words or actions?

c. Has the Iraqi government acknowledged the success of the United States mission either through words or actions?

d. Can it be deduced through statements made by concerned, relevant parties or a general analysis of the facts surrounding the issue that the United States accomplished this objective?

For all subcategories of objectives (military, humanitarian, and political) these criteria will be applied. Although in the analysis each of the different principal objectives

will be weighed separately, the results will be grouped under the three categories of humanitarian success/failure (or some degree thereof), military success/failure (or some degree thereof), and political success/failure (or some degree thereof).

Chapter 4 is intended to show how the raw research material has been compiled and fused to argue for and against certain positions in leading to some type of coherent and logical resolution to the issues identified. This chapter will be broken down into three segments based on the three different types of objectives being researched. The first segment of this chapter will cover humanitarian objectives, the second segment will cover military objectives, and the third segment will cover political objectives.

The final chapter will bring the analysis from the three categories analyzed in the previous chapter together in order to establish basic conclusions and ultimately answer the primary question. In the end, this chapter will draw general observations and lessons learned from the conduct of the analysis.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

As outlined in the previous chapter, the procedures used in the research design are rather straightforward. This chapter will take the content review of the literature and, based on the validity and persuasiveness of the content, apply pertinent criteria to any findings. These findings will be analyzed and deductive reasoning will be applied in an attempt to draw legitimate conclusions in answering the primary and secondary questions on which this research is based. The outcomes of the research design are presented by category of the three major types of objectives related to United States operations in northern Iraq; humanitarian, military, and political.

Humanitarian

The research conducted compels one to argue that there were three overarching kinds of objectives for United States intervention in the region: the first and most prominent of these being humanitarian, the second being military, and the third and least acknowledged being political. The first secondary question asked in the study is, “What were the principal intended humanitarian objectives of United States military intervention in northern Iraq during OPC/ONW?”

This research deduces that the overarching humanitarian objective of Operation Provide Comfort was: Stop the dying and suffering and establish a sustainable, secure environment in order to facilitate the ultimate return of the population to their homes (Congress 1991). This assertion is alluded to in a vast majority of the research related to the topic and it is unlikely that it can be disputed that this was the principal basis for the commencement of OPC. The research shows that upon implementation of the relief effort

initiated by the United States military, masses of Kurds left the hazards of mountain sanctuary and were given assistance by United States military forces.

The first criterion used in judging the successful accomplishment of the overarching humanitarian objective (Have the personnel and equipment specifically deployed to meet the objective been redeployed or otherwise removed from a position of influence relating to the objective?) was met. Upon transition to OPC II, the United States military handed over the relief operation to international relief non-governmental organizations and turned its efforts to other priorities. “[The mission of OPC] was to assist in the provision of humanitarian aid, and it did that for a while. And then that mission was turned over to other people” (Department of Defense 1996a). Once it was determined that the humanitarian mission of OPC I was completed, a vast majority of the troops in the region redeployed, and the relatively few personnel left behind were neither logistically outfitted nor large enough to provide any sort of substantive humanitarian aid.

In my last report, I described the Iraqi repression of the Kurds and other internal population groups, which necessitated the introduction of U.S. and other coalition armed forces into northern Iraq to provide relief and security for the civilian population. As I stated then, this effort was not intended as a permanent solution to the problem, nor as a military intervention in the internal affairs of Iraq. Rather, it was intended as a humanitarian measure to save lives. Having succeeded in providing safe conditions for the return of Kurdish refugees from the mountainous border areas, U.S. forces have now withdrawn from northern Iraq. (Bush 1991a)

The other forces remaining in the region were chiefly air forces flying out of Turkey, and were in no direct way participating in the humanitarian effort. The transition of the humanitarian mission to civil relief organizations and concurrent redeployment of the troops sent specifically to provide humanitarian assistance assure that this criterion was suitably fulfilled.

The second criterion used in judging the successful accomplishment of the overarching humanitarian objective (Has the United States government acknowledged the successful accomplishment of the objective either through words or actions?) was met.

In the 68 days since the initiation of Operation Provide Comfort, the United States has delivered by air and land over 17,000 tons of relief supplies and provided medical assistance for thousands of Iraqi refugees and displaced persons who fled to the Turkey/Iraq border area. Countless lives were saved. Through American leadership, spearheaded so well by the military . . . Iraqi refugees and displaced persons have left the inhospitable mountains and traveled to or through relief camps we built. Most are now returning to their homes. The last mountain camp has closed. The task of responding to this human tragedy is not over, but we can be grateful for what has been accomplished by the United States, the United Nations, and the international community. (Bush 1991c, 771)

One may argue that this objective was not met by military intervention, for the United States government handed what remained of the humanitarian mission over to non-governmental relief organizations upon transition from OPC I to OPC II. This action in itself may be interpreted as evidence that the United States military intervention did not completely accomplish the mission. On the other hand, one may argue that the military did in fact stop the dying and suffering, establish a secure environment, and facilitate the ultimate return of the population to their homes in working with outside relief organizations. One instance where a government official acknowledges mission success is in prepared remarks by then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Shalikashvili, who commanded forces in Iraq during OPC I: "U.S. and allied military forces . . . worked closely with U.N. officials and NGOs like CARE. With massive air and land resupply operations and a tough deterrent posture, we did in fact stop the dying and the misery and within a few months returned all the Kurds back home. It took a

marriage between military muscle and NGO know-how to do this. And it worked very, very well” (Shalikashvili 1996).

This research concludes that this statement by General Shalikashvili, corroborated with other statements made by government officials and actions taken by the United States government, points to the successful fulfillment of this criterion.

The third criterion used in judging the successful accomplishment of the overarching humanitarian objective (Has the Iraqi government acknowledged the successful accomplishment of the United States objective either through words or actions?) is not addressed in this research. The Iraqi government’s reaction to this humanitarian effort is not relevant as the Iraqi regime and armed forces were kept from impacting this relief effort by coalition forces. One can reasonably presuppose that by default the Iraqi regime considers the humanitarian effort a success, as the Kurds now live in a semi-autonomous zone in the vicinity of the OPC established safe-haven, and as Iraqi forces have rarely intervened with the Kurdish security, stability, or freedom of movement within this region. A detailed analysis of this criterion, however, will not be conducted as the research has determined that Iraq’s acknowledgement of this objective has not been clarified and is, in the end, not pertinent.

The fourth criterion used in judging the successful accomplishment of the overarching humanitarian objective (Can it be deduced through statements made by concerned, relevant parties or a general analysis of the facts surrounding the issue that the United States accomplished this objective?) was met. “The object of the operation was clearly stated in the beginning: stop the dying and suffering in the mountain camps, create a secure area in northern Iraq, and return the refugees safely to Iraq. Provide

Comfort achieved all of these objectives” (Rudd 1993, 437). This affirmation, made in 1993, is backed up by an observer’s more recent assertion: “In 1991, President George H.W. Bush mobilized the most successful complex humanitarian operation in recent times, Operation Provide Comfort in northern Iraq. That operation saved tens of thousands of innocent Kurds from starvation and disease in the aftermath of the Gulf War. . . . Operation Provide Comfort was explicitly directed to provide a seamless transfer of responsibility to non-governmental organizations once security had stabilized. . . . The mission’s success was built on unprecedented communication and coordination between the military and humanitarian groups” (*Boston Globe*, 14 October 2001).

This basic conclusion, that the humanitarian objectives were in fact met, is comparable to the overall conclusions reached by this analysis. The relevant data states that the human suffering was relieved and that the humanitarian objectives were met.

Military

While the United States military intervention in northern Iraq had clearly met its humanitarian objectives by the fall of 1991, a military force remained in place. This continued involvement in the region indicates that although the humanitarian situation had been successfully handed over to non-military agencies and non-governmental organizations, additional objectives for the United States military remained. The military objectives of American involvement in the region were not met at the conclusion of OPC I, and therefore, although a majority of United States military personnel and equipment redeployed, a considerable presence remained.

This research deduces that the overarching military objective of United States armed intervention in northern Iraq was: Deter Iraqi military aggression against the

established Kurdish safe-haven (later, “autonomous zone”) of northern Iraq. This objective can be broken down into two areas, deter Iraqi ground aggression and deter Iraqi air aggression. The initial establishment of the NFZ and security zone was to deter Iraqi air and ground forces in order to allow humanitarian assistance efforts to take place, “Lieutenant General Shalikashvili quickly activated Joint Task Force-Bravo. . . . Its focus would be to neutralize the Iraqi Army in the northern region of Iraq and implement a plan to reintroduce 500,000 Kurdish refugees back into the country” (Jones 1991, 100). Once Iraqi forces were neutralized and the humanitarian effort was established, the ground mission was completed. For this reason and for the purposes of this research, the objective of deterring Iraqi ground aggression will end at the conclusion of OPC I, while the objective of deterring Iraqi air aggression will remain for the duration of OPC/ONW.

Upon conclusion of OPC I the ground force deterrent left the region, while with the enforcement of the NFZ the air deterrent capability remained throughout. In 1991 OPC I was clearly a deterrent to Iraqi ground forces; thousands of soldiers ensured this. Upon transition to OPC II and the exodus of the majority of the ground element, it was obvious that the focus was shifted from deterring both ground and air forces to simply deterring air threats. “The mandate of Provide Comfort is to administer a no-fly zone north of the thirty-sixth parallel in order to prevent Iraq from using its air power against Kurds. And that’s the mandate we are enforcing” (Department of Defense 1996b). Upon transitioning from OPC II to ONW, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Shalikashvili clarified the American military objective in northern Iraq “Operation Provide Comfort had provided humanitarian assistance to the Kurds and enforcement of

the northern no-fly zone. The new Operation Northern Watch will focus exclusively on enforcement of the no-fly zone” (Congress 1997).

Upon conclusion of this study, it is anticipated that the research will argue that this military mission was overall a success in accomplishing this objective. Although there have been incursions north of the thirty-sixth parallel by both air and ground forces, Hussein’s forces have ultimately had very little impact in this region in the time since OPC commenced.

The first criterion used in judging the successful accomplishment of the overarching military objective (Have the personnel and equipment specifically deployed to meet the objective been redeployed or otherwise removed from a position of influence relating to the objective?) was not met. Although the majority of military personnel and equipment redeployed after OPC I, and the remaining ground force was very small in comparison to what had been deployed at the height of the operation, this and a still significant air presence remained in place upon the termination OPC I. After Desert Strike the remaining ground force left the region and only air power enforcing the no-fly zone remained, yet this air presence continued operations and remained in place up to the commencement of Iraqi Freedom. It is therefore obvious that the personnel and equipment specifically deployed to meet the objective had not redeployed or otherwise removed from a position of influence relating to the objective. The study quite clearly affirms that this criterion was not met.

The second criterion used in judging the successful accomplishment of the overarching military objective (Has the United States government acknowledged the successful accomplishment of the objective either through words or actions?) was met.

By the end of OPC I, government decision-makers had determined that it was safe to redeploy a majority of ground forces and hand over the humanitarian mission to non-governmental organizations without a military ground force for protection. This action indicates that, in the eyes of the United States government, the Iraqi ground threat against the region had been greatly deterred and initial success in realizing this objective had been demonstrated. Statements made in 2002 by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz further evidence this position, “After the war ended when some million Kurdish refugees were huddled freezing in the mountains on the Turkish border, the Turks were afraid to let them in their country and we didn’t want to let them starve. President Bush ordered U.S. troops to go back into Iraq to create a haven for the Kurds. [USMC General] Jim Jones and his Marines faced the Iraqi army and, without firing a shot, were able to move them out of the northern third of their country and to create a sanctuary that is still largely observed to this day” (Wolfowitz 2002).

In researching the military objective of deterring the Iraqi air threat, there is evidence that the United States acknowledged mission accomplishment many times. In a 10 September 1996 response to a question asking why the military continues to enforce a NFZ over northern Iraq, a Department of Defense official acknowledged that “maintaining the no-fly zone over northern Iraq does provide--does prevent Iraq from using its airpower in a way to take retribution against one Kurdish faction or another” (Department of Defense 1996a). The above statements from government officials affirm that the criterion of the United States government acknowledgement of the successful accomplishment of the military objective of deterrence was fulfilled.

The third criterion used in judging the successful accomplishment of the overarching military objective (Has the Iraqi government acknowledged the successful accomplishment of the United States objective either through words or actions?) was met. The research conducted shows that although there were initial Iraqi efforts to keep ground forces inside the Kurdish safe-haven, this threat was soon mitigated. “Iraq agreed to withdraw all armed forces and secret police from Dahuk and take up new positions 15 kilometers south of the city. On 20 May, a small convoy of coalition vehicles entered Dahuk and established a forward command post. . . . The security zone now extended 160 kilometers east to west and 60 kilometers north to south below the Turkish-Iraqi border” (Jones 1997, 106-7).

Although Iraq never accepted the legitimacy of the NFZ, and made many public statements denouncing coalition operations in the region, its actions indicate that the United States objective of keeping the ground and air threat from committing acts of aggression against the Kurdish autonomous zone was achieved. There were no severe Iraqi ground attacks into the autonomous zone during OPC I, the ground attack into Irbil occurred during OPC II and was retaliated against with Desert Strike. Henceforth the Iraqi ground forces remained non-threatening to the region. The fact that the ground incursion at Irbil came long after the change from OPC I to OPC II means that it has no relevance for this study based on the aforementioned condition. Iraq attempted no serious air incursion into the autonomous zone since operations in the region commenced, and during OPC I it made no serious ground incursion into the autonomous zone. This inaction on the part of the Iraqi regime indicates that it acknowledged the successful

accomplishment of the objective of deterring Iraqi military aggression against the established Kurdish safe-haven. This criterion was met.

The evidence pertaining to the fourth criterion used in judging the successful accomplishment of the overarching military objective (Can it be deduced through statements made by concerned, relevant parties or a general analysis of the facts surrounding the issue that the United States accomplished this objective?) is inconclusive. This research can deduce no decisive evidence to either substantiate or refute the fulfillment of this criterion. This study contends that this criterion was both confirmed and contradicted by numerous relevant sources and, therefore the outcome is open to doubt. Although Sarah Graham-Brown, author of numerous articles and books regarding the Hussein regime and the American military role in the region, stated “The zone has been effective in deterring Iraqi air attacks,” (Graham-Brown 2001) and this contention was corroborated numerous times throughout the research, it was also challenged. “No-fly operations over Iraq have already lasted over five years, and there is no end in sight. Provide Comfort II/ Northern Watch, begun in July 1991, was initially intended to protect the Kurdish population in northern Iraq. Southern Watch, begun in August 1992, was initially intended to protect the Shi’ite population of southern Iraq. No-fly operations have not been very effective in protecting either group” (Pirnie 1998, 14).

The instances where reports contend that the NFZ was ineffective are on the whole vague and in very few cases present compelling arguments substantiated with comprehensive evidence; however, the position is of note if for no other reason than many sources advocating this position are, in the determination of the researcher, extremely reliable. It is for this reason that the results of the study regarding this criterion

are inconclusive and therefore it cannot be established that the criterion was successfully fulfilled.

The research concludes that there is no evidence that the Iraqi regime made any significant attempt to conduct acts of aggression against the Kurdish safe-haven during the time frame in which Provide Comfort I was carried out. This leads one to deduce that in this area, the objective was met. This research also indicates that there is no evidence that Iraq made any noteworthy threatening air incursions north of the thirty-sixth parallel throughout the period of OPC/ONW. This leads one to deduce that this area of the criterion has been met. Based on this study it is possible to say that Saddam Hussein's military was successfully deterred from armed aggression against the Kurdish population of northern Iraq in the time period from OPC up to 19 March 2003. However, the simple fact remains that the forces allocated to the enforcement of the NFZ remained in place up to the onset of Iraqi Freedom. Although the United States government indicated that the mission was being accomplished and that Hussein was deterred from acts of aggression into the autonomous zone, the mission continued. This study deduces that the military objective was being met as of 19 March 2003, but it had not been entirely accomplished.

Political

The humanitarian concern surrounding the situation in northern Iraq was indubitably the primary reason for the initiation of American military involvement, yet humanitarian tragedies occur all over the globe and relatively few receive the attention of the United States military. This may lead an observer to ask "Why northern Iraq, and not elsewhere?" One argument for military intervention regarding the humanitarian issues of northern Iraq is that the operations served the political interest of the United States

government. The literature review lends veracity to this argument on many fronts. First of all, the Safwan Accords made no mention of the Iraqi use of military force against the peoples of its own nation; therefore many argue that the war ended without the coalition, more specifically without the United States military, satisfactorily quelling the Iraqi military threat. Second, the United States military was still in the region in force and the Turkish government was faced with a refugee problem from an ethnic population it considered an adversary. And finally the international press, after focusing on Desert Shield and Desert Storm for so long, was looking for a story. The story it found showed the repression and suffering of a Kurdish population within the borders of one country that America had just defeated in war and another country that the United States considered its staunchest ally in the Muslim world. These factors all lend to the reasoning that the United States government felt compelled to act for political reasons. It is anticipated that the research will argue that some of the political objectives of the United States were achieved, and others were not.

Although the research did not come across any instance in which the United States government specifically addressed political objectives surrounding the issue, this research deduces that the overarching, implicit political objectives of OPC/ONW came in two phases. Initially, the political objectives of military intervention were to save face in the eyes of the international community that was witnessing the suffering on the news and at the same time to appease the Turkish government that was at the time one of our most valuable allies in the Middle East.

The first three criteria used in judging the successful accomplishment of the overarching political objective (Have the personnel and equipment specifically deployed

to meet the objective been redeployed or otherwise removed from a position of influence relating to the objective?, Has the United States government acknowledged the successful accomplishment of this objective either through words or actions?, and Has the Iraqi government acknowledged the successful accomplishment of this objective either through words or actions?) are not addressed in this research. The fact that this research has produced no evidence that this objective is specified by any United States military or political authority as a reason for deploying troops or dedicating any other military resources negates the researcher's ability to apply the first criterion. Although it may be deduced that the second criterion was achieved as America faced no negative political consequences and likely did "save face," and the United States political relationship with Turkey came out of OPC I intact, a lack of acknowledgement of this objective, and the resultant lack of acknowledgment of accomplishment of the objective, makes this criterion inapplicable. The third criterion does not apply simply because this research can find no indication that the Iraqi regime ever acknowledged such political objectives.

The fourth criterion used in judging the successful accomplishment of the overarching political objective (Can it be deduced through statements made by concerned, relevant parties or a general analysis of the facts surrounding the issue that the United States accomplished this objective?) was met. Almost immediately the objective of appeasing Turkey was met. "The persecution of the Kurds ended, and Turkey was reassured as to cross-border stability" (Byman 2000, 46). The facts surrounding the issue of "saving face" are evident. The international community was shocked to see the suffering of the Kurdish population, and once the United States intervened with military force to alleviate this suffering all reports indicate that America had redeemed itself in the

eyes of the world. Although many say that the situation should have been avoided altogether by the United States (and the UN) imposing stricter limitations on Hussein's use of military forces at the Safwan Accords, and still others say that the help came too late, the fact is that once military forces arrived and implemented Provide Comfort, the international community reacted positively and the US did "save face." The international press saw that the disaster was over and for the most part departed northern Iraq, leaving the international community to focus its attention elsewhere.

With Turkey's appeasement assured and what could have become a public affairs disaster for the United States administration avoided, the political objectives of military intervention changed. Having such a military presence in the region allowed the military the ability to focus on what may have turned out to be the overriding objective for OPC II and ONW, the containment of Saddam Hussein's regime. Merriam-Webster's online dictionary defines containment as: "the policy, process, or result of preventing the expansion of a hostile power or ideology" (*Merriam-Webster Online*, <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>, 1 April 2003).

UN inspectors had been in Iraq since the end of the Gulf War, negating Hussein's ability to effectively revitalize his chemical munitions arsenal. Now, with OPC in the north and Southern Watch in the south, the United States had the ability to limit Hussein's ability to take military action against his own population and threaten his neighbors in the region. "But the rhetoric surrounding the zones still reiterates the formulas used to justify them since 1991. These formulas hold that no-fly zones protect civilian populations--Kurds in the north and Shi'a in the south--and that they are part of an international policy of 'containing Iraq' and protecting its neighbors from attack"

(Graham-Brown 2001). Containment became the political objective for the United States military in OPC/ONW, and it is anticipated that this study will show that this mission was for a time being accomplished, but in the end failed to be an effective long-term policy for dealing with the Iraqi regime.

As with the previous political objective, this research has produced no evidence that the objective of containment is specified by any authority as a reason for initially deploying troops or dedicating any other military resources to the region. This negates the researcher's ability to apply the first criterion.

The second criterion used in judging the successful accomplishment of this political objective (Has the United States government acknowledged the successful accomplishment of this objective either through words or actions?) was not met. Initially, it appeared as though containing the Iraqi regime was not only possible, but effectively being accomplished. In a 1996 quote by State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns, "We now have to look to the international relief organizations to provide the kind of help that Operation Provide Comfort did in the past--the economic, humanitarian help. . . . But we will continue to run the military mission, which has been so effective in containing Saddam Hussein" (*New York Times*, 12 September 1996). Here the administration clearly states that in 1996 the military presence in the region was effective in containing Saddam Hussein. In 1998 President Clinton stated "The no-fly zones have been and will remain an important part of our containment policy. Because we effectively control the skies over much of Iraq, Saddam has been unable to use air power to repress his own people or to lash out again at his neighbors" (Clinton 1998). This affirms that this objective remained and was still effectively being accomplished into the ONW years. However, as

time passed, it appears as though the government's faith in the policy of containment started to wane. "Saddam Hussein is a 'threat to civilization' who will be strengthened if those who believe he should be contained by the international community, rather than removed by force, get their way. . . . Containment failed yesterday in Iraq. Containment fails today. And containment will fail tomorrow" (*Washington Times* 14 February 2003). This viewpoint stated by Senator John McCain was to become the United States government's official position; containment had failed and was not the answer.

Again, the third criterion used in judging the successful accomplishment of this political objective (Has the Iraqi government acknowledged the successful accomplishment of this objective either through words or actions?) does not apply, as this research can find no indication that the Iraqi regime has ever acknowledged such a political objective.

The fourth criterion used in judging the successful accomplishment of this political objective (Can it be deduced through statements made by concerned, relevant parties or a general analysis of the facts surrounding the issue that the United States accomplished this objective?) was not met. Author Anthony Cordesman makes the contention that Iraq can only be contained by military capability "No deal with Iraq is likely to last longer than the West's military presence in the Gulf. . . . Diplomacy will at best be an extension of force by other means. As is the case with Iran, the threat from Iraq can ultimately only be contained or countered by war fighting capability" (Cordesman 1994, 6). OPC/ONW was a part of this war fighting capability, and with this capability it appeared that Hussein's regime had been effectively contained. The research indicates that this was the majority opinion in 1994, a time when Iraq had neither conducted

decisive military operations against neighboring countries since OPC was established nor been able to effectively expand its military capability. Again, however, as time went on the containment policy and its effectiveness came into question.

During the United States presidential race in 2000, Scott Ritter was published in a Los Angeles newspaper acknowledging that this policy had been unsuccessful. “The problem of Iraq is complex and vexing. Over the past eight years, the Clinton administration was trapped in a Saddam-centric policy of regime removal, which dictated the containment of the Iraqi dictator. . . . This policy has been an abject failure” (*Los Angeles Times*, 5 September 2000).

In September of 2002 United Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair is quoted as saying “It is clear that, despite sanctions, the policy of containment has not worked sufficiently well to prevent Saddam from developing these weapons. I am in no doubt that the threat is serious and current, that he has made progress on weapons of mass destruction and that he has to be stopped” (*New York Times*, 25 September 2002).

Again, in applying the fourth research criterion it can only be concluded that the objective was not met. Although initially the application of military force, some of which came from OPC/ONW, was effective in containing Saddam Hussein, in the end the objective was not reached. OPC/ONW was ultimately not able to contain the regime of Saddam Hussein.

The literature reviewed indicates that the United States military was initially involved in northern Iraq in order to accomplish humanitarian objectives. The analysis of this literature points to the necessity for military objectives to be accomplished first in order to make the humanitarian effort tenable, and then continued in order to ensure the

deterrence of further acts of aggression. Tied to both the humanitarian and military objectives, political objectives were considered in calling for the execution of operations. It is anticipated that the analysis will show that, in accordance with the stated criteria, the United States military intervention in northern Iraq either accomplished or was accomplishing its principal humanitarian and military objectives in the region, and ultimately failed in accomplishing its paramount political objective (see table 1).

Table 1. Criteria Matrix

Criteria	Humanitarian Objective	Military Objective	Political Objective
Personnel and equipment redeployed or otherwise removed?	Yes	No	N/A
United States government acknowledged success of objectives?	Yes	Yes	No
Iraqi government acknowledged success of objectives?	N/A	Yes	N/A
Other parties or analysis indicate the United States accomplished this objective?	Yes	Inconclusive	No

The purpose of this chapter is not only to recognize the anticipated outcomes of the research design implemented but also to acknowledge insufficiencies of the study in general. Over the course of this research it has become apparent that the primary question “In the time period between Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom, did United States military intervention in northern Iraq accomplish its intended objectives?” is largely inadequate to conclusively determine the desired end state of this study. The potential objectives were numerous. Many of these objectives were accomplished while many were being accomplished, without having been successfully brought to fulfillment. While it can be said that many of the objectives were fully met, it is clear that many others were only partially met. To comprehensively determine whether or not OPC I, OPC II, and ONW were or were not overall successes, any objective of these missions that was only partially met requires some scale to determine the extent to which it was or was not fulfilled. In the end, it has become apparent that the primary question was missing two words--“how well.” Perhaps more suitably the primary question may have read, “In the time period between Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom, how well did United States military intervention in northern Iraq accomplish its intended objectives?” This is a topic for potential further research and will be addressed as such in the concluding chapter of this study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Throughout the course of the research the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the stated objective of “regime change” in Iraq affected what might have been the outcome of this paper. Several possible objectives for American military involvement in northern Iraq presented themselves throughout the course of this study, and although there were references to regime change in the past, rarely were these looked upon as an official government position that could be accomplished through military force. Unquestionably the forces participating in Operation Provide Comfort and Operation Northern Watch were not designed for or intended to bring about this regime change. They were, however, a suitable military presence for many of the objectives that were specified over the course of OPC/ONW.

As previously stated, this research methodology used any of four possible criteria in determining whether or not an objective was fulfilled. Those criteria were:

1. Have the personnel and equipment specifically deployed to meet the objective been redeployed or otherwise removed from a position of influence relating to the objective?
2. Has the United States government acknowledged mission success either through words or actions?
3. Has the Iraqi government acknowledged the success of the United States mission either through words or actions?

4. Can it be deduced through statements made by concerned, relevant parties or a general analysis of the facts surrounding the issue that the United States accomplished this objective?

In accordance with the criteria matrix the study shows that the humanitarian objectives of Operation Provide Comfort/Operation Northern Watch were fulfilled. OPC/ONW met all three of the applicable criteria for mission success regarding humanitarian objectives (one criterion was not applicable). The study also shows that the military objectives of these operations were being fulfilled. In regards to these military objectives and in accordance with the criteria matrix, two of the four criteria were met, one of the criteria was not met, and the results regarding the fourth criterion were inconclusive. The criteria matrix also indicates that neither of the two applicable criteria for the political objectives of OPC/ONW were met. Overall, the criteria matrix indicates that five criteria were met, three were not met, one was inconclusive, and three were not applicable (one humanitarian, two political). Therefore this study may conclude that, based on the research design implemented, the answer to the primary question “In the time period between Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom, did United States military intervention in northern Iraq accomplish its intended objectives?” is yes. The United States military intervention in northern Iraq met a majority of the applicable criteria in the research design and therefore it can be concluded that, based on these criteria, OPC/ONW met with overall success.

At the onset of this study, the intent was to determine what role the United States military was playing in northern Iraq and whether or not American forces needed to remain in the region to accomplish some unrealized objective(s) (this was prior to

Operation Iraqi Freedom). The research intended to determine how the tenets of UNSCR 688 and other applicable Security Council resolutions were being accomplished through the military efforts of Operation Provide Comfort and Operation Northern Watch, and whether or not those tenets had been or were being fulfilled by this military presence. Once it was determined that the United Nations Security Council had not sanctioned United States military operations in northern Iraq and that therefore the objectives of the military presence were not officially tied to any UN resolution, the direction of the research changed. In order to determine whether or not the objectives of the military were accomplished, the research had to determine what the objectives were (in view of the assertion that that they were not associated with any UNSCR). This proved to a daunting task, as the number of possible objectives seemed countless. It was determined that analyzing all possible objectives was impractical due to the limitations placed on this study, therefore, it was necessary to determine what the over-arching primary objectives of the presence were and whether or not these had been accomplished. The study determined that the primary objectives of OPC/ONW could be broken down into the three sub-categories of humanitarian, military, and political objectives.

Although it is likely that there were humanitarian, military, and political objectives ongoing throughout the entire decade-plus that this research covers and it is also likely that all of these objectives were linked together or nested in some form or fashion, the evidence indicates that each sub-category can be identified as the primary objective for each of the three phases of American military operations in northern Iraq. The first phase, Operation Provide Comfort I, from 6 April 1991 to 24 July 1991, was primarily a humanitarian operation aimed at bringing an end to the suffering of the

displaced Kurds of the region, and therefore the humanitarian objectives of the operation are where the focus should be based. The second phase, Operation Provide Comfort II, from 25 July 1991 to 31 December 1996 was primarily a military operation aimed at deterring Saddam Hussein from again attacking the Kurdish population of northern Iraq, and therefore the military objectives of this operation are where the focus should be based. The third and final phase, Operation Northern Watch, from 1 January 1997 to 19 March 2003 was primarily focused on the political objective of containment and therefore, the political objective is where the focus should be based. In answering the primary question, “In the time period between Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom, did United States military intervention in northern Iraq accomplish its intended objectives?” it is therefore suitable that it be answered for each of the three phases of the application of military force in northern Iraq, OPC I and its humanitarian objectives, OPC II and its military objectives, and ONW and its political objectives.

Based on the statement that Operation Provide Comfort I was primarily a humanitarian operation focused on humanitarian objectives, this study can acknowledge that this mission was a success. The research indicates that each of the humanitarian objectives of the operation were successfully fulfilled in accordance with the applicable criteria. The answer to the primary question when applied to Operation Provide Comfort I is yes, United States military intervention in northern Iraq accomplished its intended objectives. It accomplished these objectives through the employment of a massive air and ground campaign that was extremely resource intensive. It consolidated the resources of a large multi-national coalition to afford hundreds of thousands of displaced persons living in abhorrent conditions and lacking in basic human needs the opportunity to be fed and

sheltered, to gain required medical attention, and eventually to return to their homes. It enjoyed popular support both in the United States and worldwide, and it worked with international non-governmental organizations to ensure that all available resources were tapped into. Finally, it brought with it the necessary military might to overwhelm any Iraqi attempt to obstruct its efforts. Indeed, this significant humanitarian effort accomplished its objectives.

Based on the statement that Operation Provide Comfort II was primarily focused on military objectives, this study can acknowledge that this mission was successful to some extent. The research indicates that the mission of deterrence was accomplished up to the Iraqi siege on Irbil, a somewhat limited attack that involved some political alliance between the Iraqi regime and one Kurdish organization on one hand, and infighting amongst the Kurdish population on the other. The fact that it can be argued that some Kurds themselves temporarily allied with the Iraqi military makes it difficult to say that the United States military objective of deterrence was not accomplished, as the population it was attempting to deter aggression toward may have played a role in igniting the conflict. Aside from the siege on Irbil, the military objective of deterrence was generally being met in accordance with the applicable criteria, and therefore this study can acknowledge a considerable degree of success for OPC II. The objective, however, was never completely realized. Therefore, the answer to the primary question when applied to Operation Provide Comfort II is yes; United States military intervention in northern Iraq did accomplish its intended objective of deterrence, although there is no assurance that this success could have been maintained indefinitely. In comparison to OPC I, OPC II employed minimal forces to bring about this success. The deterrent came

from a small symbolic presence on the ground in Zakho made up of mainly American Special Forces personnel, ensuring the Hussein regime that if these forces were endangered, the full wrath of the United States military could be leveraged in order to ensure their safety or to seek reprisal. Along with this ground presence, a powerful air presence remained to enforce the no-fly zone and provide support to the ground force if the need were ever to arise. OPC II remained a coalition; however, the countries participating in this coalition were much fewer in number than in OPC I. The popular support enjoyed by OPC I was replaced by a relative indifference throughout the globe. As the mission continued over the years, the world media, and consequently the world public, found other issues to draw their attention. The dissolution of the USSR, the democratization of the Eastern Bloc, and the Balkan crisis left OPC II out of the limelight to carry on without the popular support or hardly the acknowledgement of the international public. The non-governmental relief organizations that were focused in northern Iraq in 1991 found other areas of the world to show their presence (again, primarily the Balkans). Finally, with the removal of the overwhelming military might that left at the conclusion of OPC I, the presence was now only able to act as a deterrent, and not a true defense or retaliation force that could instill absolute trepidation in the heart of the Iraqi regime. During OPC I, the siege on Irbil would have been foolhardy on the part of Saddam Hussein. During OPC II, it succeeded in igniting a chain of events that compelled the last of the coalition ground presence to leave northern Iraq. OPC II was an effective deterrent for a time, but one cannot ascertain how effective it might have remained as the years passed and Hussein gained time to rebuild his military might.

Based on the statement that Operation Northern Watch was primarily focused on a political objective, this study can acknowledge that this mission was unsuccessful. The objective of containment was not reached in accordance with applicable criteria. The answer to the primary question when applied to Operation Northern Watch is no; United States military intervention in northern Iraq did not accomplish its intended objective. Not only did the siege on Irbil compel the last coalition ground presence to leave Iraq, but also it succeeded in reducing the coalition, once thirty nations strong, to three. This being said, one may rationally presuppose that a nation such as Iraq, that has a vast majority of its expanse over-flown by the armed aircraft of a nation that is far superior in resources, technology, and military might, would be contained. This type of reasoning, however, does not apply when dealing with an irrational dictator. The Hussein regime can be characterized by totalitarianism, brutality, and megalomania. When a dictator such as this sees a coalition one-tenth its original size, without a ground presence, faced with military deployments all over the world that are much more significant in terms of force presence and international exposure, this dictator will not be contained. Hussein saw the removal of the ground presence as weakness and exploited this. He likely saw that the international community may have become disenchanted with the ongoing burden of dealing with his nuisance and possibly also believed that the UN and United States were not likely to act with decisive military action if he kicked out the United Nations inspectors in 1998. If he did believe this, he was correct. Just as after the siege on Irbil, the American military response to the ousting of UN inspectors was to attack with cruise missiles, something Hussein was apparently prepared to endure. As time drew on Hussein built up his arsenal and grew more powerful while “containment fatigue” set in across the

international community. Operation Northern Watch, even in conjunction with Operation Southern Watch, was ineffective at containing Saddam Hussein.

The application of military force in northern Iraq was very effective during OPC I, it was effective to an extent in OPC II, and it ultimately failed in ONW. The primary lessons that can be drawn are simple. Most military actions must be decisive and summarily concluded. If, at the Safwan Accords, Hussein would not have been authorized the use of his military forces, particularly his air power, it can be argued Operation Provide Comfort would never have been necessary. Summary conclusion was not reached with the Safwan Accords at the end of Desert Storm. If upon the siege of Irbil, decisive military force had been used to ensure Hussein's military was incapable of further offensive action or expansion, it can be argued that Hussein would have been contained. Operation Desert Strike was not decisive. Similarly, if upon the ousting of the UN inspectors, decisive military force had been used to reinstate a UN inspection regime, it can be argued that Iraqi Freedom would have never been necessary. Operation Desert Fox was not decisive. Reason does not apply when dealing with the unreasonable. In this situation the irrational tyrant can only be dealt with by the overwhelming application of decisive military action and a summary conclusion to that action. During the course of this research, this result was apparently realized by President George W. Bush's "coalition of the willing" and this application of overwhelming military force was seen with Operation Iraqi Freedom. In the weeks, months, and years to come the question of whether or not the lessons learned from the blunders of Safwan and the failure to bring about summary conclusion to decisive military action, will be answered in respect to Iraqi Freedom.

Potential Topics for Further Research

As previously noted, throughout the course of the research it appeared as though the research question may have not only addressed whether or not an objective was met, but how well an objective was met. The analysis indicates that that the humanitarian objectives of OPC/ONW were fulfilled as it also indicates that the military objectives were being fulfilled at the onset of Iraqi Freedom. When applying the “how well” question to both of these objectives, the research indicates that the answer is rather clearly “very well” in the case of humanitarian objectives and “somewhat well” in the case of military objectives. Applying the “how well” test to the over-riding political objective, however, that of containing Saddam Hussein, may not be as easily answered. In his statements to the House Armed Services Committee on 10 March 1999 Dr. John Hillen indicated that the answer to “how well,” in referring to the fulfillment of the political objective of containing Saddam Hussein would likely be “not very well.”

To call any military strategy a success presupposes the coherent measure of that success. The current set of operations against Iraqi air defenses are deemed successful because by and large American and British planes are hitting their targets and slowly degrading Saddam’s anti-aircraft capabilities. . . . Nonetheless, while these short-term military goals appear definable and achievable, they do not appear to be conclusively linked to an end game in Iraq.

If the U.S. is only in the business of incrementally plinking 1970’s era anti-aircraft batteries in Iraq, then the policy is indeed a success. If on the other hand, those military actions are supposed to be conclusively linked to a larger and more sustainable political objective in Iraq, I am not so sure. Using the destruction of anti-aircraft batteries in Iraq to measure the success of our overall policy may be as irrelevant as using body counts to measure the success of America’s strategy in Vietnam.

The daily military actions in and of themselves are important tactical victories. But do they add up to a comprehensive policy? The question the President and his policy staff must answer is strategic to what end?

The administration claims that containment is the official strategy and the U.S. wishes only to keep Saddam in his box, such that he lacks the military capability to threaten his neighbors, develop weapons of mass destruction or

destabilize the Persian Gulf region in some way. . . . At the same time the President and his National Security Advisor have strongly hinted at the need for a change of regime in Iraq and joined Congress in passing the Iraq Liberation Act.

Now, there is an inherent tension between these two goals, and I would argue the administration cannot have it both ways. In the first place, pursuing two different policies on the cheap greatly reduces the chances of either coming to fruition. Second, the administration has not constructed a policy framework for either policy that would prepare Congress, the American people or our allies for a lasting solution to the problem of Saddam Hussein. . . .

. . . Even then if Saddam is weakening and Desert Fox or this current air campaign is accelerating his demise, the U.S. is ill positioned to influence or take advantage of the outcome. Our lukewarm approach to a regime change in Iraq has put America in the back of the bus, not the driver's seat. . . .

. . . The immediate threat is not imminent, but decisions are. The policy of containment, bombing or no bombing, is not sustainable for several reasons. The first is it is inconclusive, having not yielded even the glimmer of a solution to the Iraq problem for the past 8 years. Second, every indecisive round keeps pressure on Saddam, but also allows him time and breathing space to further develop weapons of mass destruction. This is especially so now that the U.N. inspections regime, imperfect though it was, has collapsed.

Third, the continued sanctions on Iraq give Saddam Hussein legitimacy and strengthen his hold on power over the suffering Iraqi people. Fourth, the policy, as you well-know here on the Hill, is expensive and demoralizing, costing the U.S. billions every year to rush troops to the Gulf back and forth and further taxing the much-stretched American military. Fifth, containment fatigue is setting in, with allies and other powers tiring of the routine and wanting to resume normal and business relations with Iraq. (Congress 1999)

An in-depth study of ONWs paramount political objective of containment is a potential topic for further research. The United States' application of military force in attempting to accomplish this objective during ONW was insufficient and the objective was never reached. What might have been done to make this containment objective practicable? Is the implementation of no-fly zones an insufficient application of force to successfully contain a regime such as Saddam Hussein's? What amount of force is sufficient to contain a regime such as this? Is the cost of maintaining requisite military force worth the benefits of containment? These question and others could be addressed through further study.

This study only addressed the application of military force in broad terms; the specific means employed by the military coalition were not addressed in any detail. A potential topic for further research is a detailed study of the means employed by OPC/ONW, and what ends were gained through these means.

In defining the scope of this study it was stated that the legal and ethical issues of one nation, or a coalition of nations, imposing military force across international borders without invitation or permission for humanitarian purposes would not be broached. This is an area where the interpretation of UN charter, the Geneva Accords and Hague Protocols, international law, and social norms in relation to what is and is not just might be addressed in their application to OPC/ONW.

OPC/ONW was a long and costly mission for the United States and other coalition nations. The initial result was the avoidance of a humanitarian disaster in 1991, but the mission continued on up to the onset of Operation Iraqi Freedom. A study of the costs of executing OPC/ONW versus the benefits gained may be possible and worthy of further research.

It can be argued that OPC/ONW was purely a result of a failure of the Safwan Accords to summarily deal with Saddam Hussein. It can be argued that the end result of OPC/ONW is Operation Iraqi Freedom. It might also be argued that Operation Iraqi Freedom is little more than an attempt on the part of the United States to turn back the clock and do what it might have done at the conclusion of the 1991 Gulf War, depose Saddam Hussein. A study into the Safwan Accords, what was demanded by the United States and United Nations versus what might have been demanded, may be a topic worthy of further research.

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